

BAY STATE INTERPRET EAR

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August 1981

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It's August of the biggest summer in Interpretive Services' history . . . It is the time when it takes that extra burst of energy to keep programs fresh, creative and interesting to the visitor and to the interpreter. The theme of programs in Massachusetts parks for this month is "The Sky Over Massachusetts". Borrowing on the expertise and experience of the new organization, "For Spacious Skies", interpreters are incorporating the theme into their ongoing programs. The result has been some innovative activities — currently in the works are sunrise ceremonies, 'star treks', kite flying festivals, and instructions in making weather instruments.

A REMINDER TO ALL INTERPRETORS:

— Please complete your evaluations (including attendance records, publicity samples, program outlines etc., etc.) and return them to us by September 18, 1981 (unless your program extends beyond that date).

— Gather together your graphics materials, equipment, research and all that you've collected which will be used in the park next summer, and leave it with your supervisor. Prepare an inventory and leave one copy with your supervisor, then send one to Charlie Dane by September 15.

—We'll be in touch with details for a fall gathering.

Thanks for a great summer !

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT
COLLECTION

NOV 18 1983

University of Massachusetts
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OFFICE of INTERPRETIVE SERVICES
Massachusetts
Department of Environmental Management

In Search of the Marsh Hawk Nest

The other morning I donned my black rubber boots, jeans, sweatshirt, naturalist paraphernalia and went in search of the marsh hawk nest. It started as a quiet marshwalk, looking at the vervain, skullcap, loosestrife and willow herb that abounds there. Then, I found myself surrounded by a sea of attacking poison-ivy — through it I went, feeling like Columbus, Darwin, Henry Beston and the eight year old little boy exploring his backyard. I couldn't have been happier.

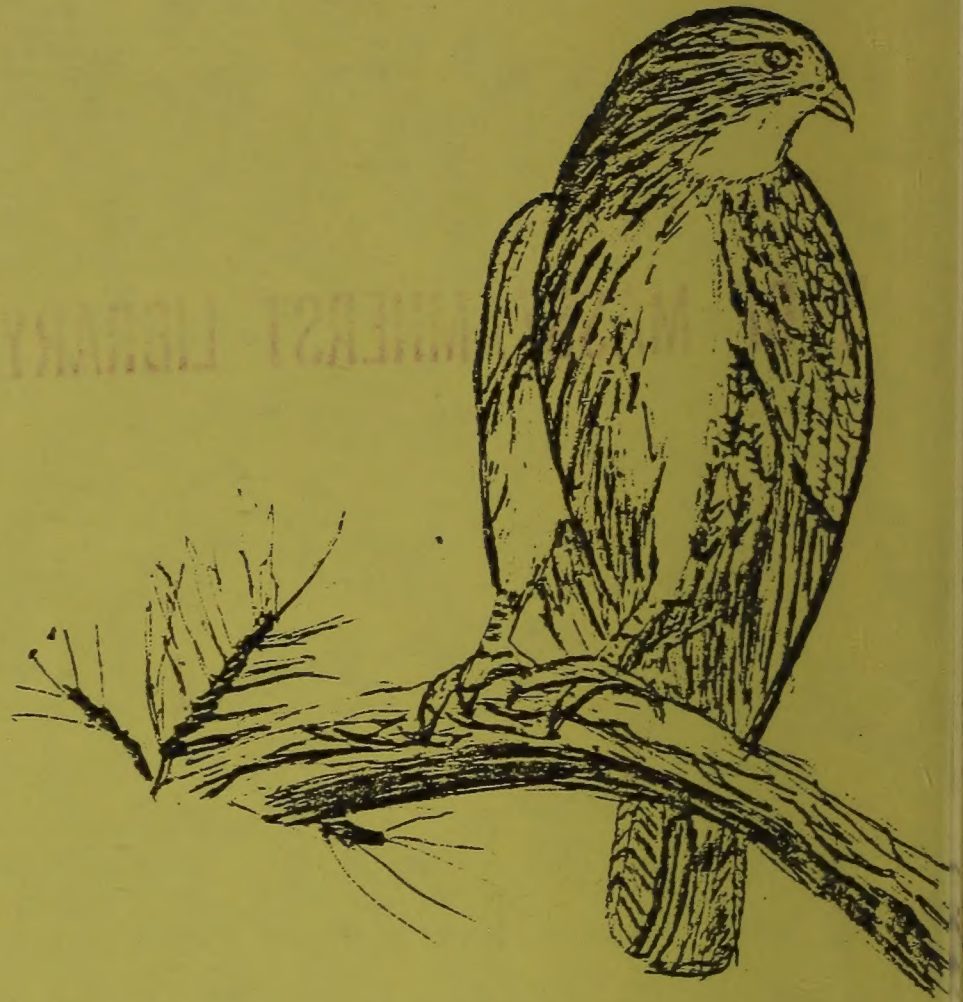
The vegetation grew denser and darker, taller and meaner as I started to ascend the 10 foot hill. The large tree that had caught my curiosity a month ago, was finally to be climbed. To the summit, 40 feet above sea level. The stench of guano grew stronger. My nostrils filled and my heartbeat quickened. The nest must be near.

The harsh cackling that originally willed me on this morning, started up. A green heron flew up from the undergrowth. The poison-ivy was 8 feet tall. I continued, my head, covered with a hood, was bent to avoid the toxin.

A rustling, I looked up. 5 feet away was a female marsh hawk. As her head turned sideways, my heart skipped a beat. Would she attack? We stared for 10 long seconds. She flew clumsily away— a contrast to the noble raptor I often saw hovering and soaring effortlessly.

Arriving at the largest tree, I scanned the top for signs of a raptor nest. I began the climb. Grasping the wet trunk, I could not get a firm grip. My black rubber boots were too slippery for it had rained the previous night. I took them off and tried with barefeet but it was to no avail.

The tree that I had headed for turned out to be a small grove of 10 ash trees. The thicket is quite dense, and full of night shade, honeysuckle, blackberry vines and dead brush. I see the green heron again, in the top of a tree. It flies off. The guano stench is strong, as I peer along the ground.



I begin my descent, peering through the tangle of honeysuckle. My goal, a large nest made of twigs and branches high in a tree. I prepare myself for the hazardous poison-ivy journey. Pulling the draw string of my hood tight, I'm ready. . .

Home, sweet, home, the familiar secure campsite greets me. The second journey of the morning begins as I peel off the expedition clothes, bathe in 4 cups of lukewarm water and yellow soap, and anoint my skin with a homemade concoction of jewelweed. Next week, I plan to visit the library, plow through the literature and discover where marsh hawks nest.

Nest 3–7 in. high and 1 ft. or more in diameter. It is made of grass, twigs, occasionally moss, and is located on the ground near a marsh.

Kim Noyes
Grape Island



a simple gift

Modern life is hectic. A 45-minute boat ride out into Boston's Harbor Islands can be all one needs to get away. Yet, people often ask when visiting the park, "How many islands can I see in three hours?"

An asset of our natural surroundings is that we can 'do nothing' and still be experiencing — passively, quietly. Not an assault of sounds and sights and smells. Not an urban overstimulation that grabs our attention and then steals it. But the slow creeping into our awareness of a sweet fragrance from an unknown flower; a bobwhite calling sounds above the constant undersound of crickets and boats; our unfocused gaze slowly notices the patterns in the overlapping leaves of sumac.

As island managers, there are always so many things to do. We could spend an entire afternoon doing nothing, so much to do, feeling unproductive and frustrated, doing nothing. Or, we could intersperse our activity and planning with times of 'doing nothing', relaxing, enjoying our surroundings, and letting them teach us—actively and passively.

Joy Merzer
Peddocks Island

Savoy

Savoy is a favorite campground for many people. We've had campers from Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New Jersey. Many stay for a week or two. There's plenty to do — hiking, two swimming ponds, boating, fishing, and lots of nature programs! This is the second summer Savoy has had a full-time naturalist. A new addition to the program is the Naturalist Center, formerly the woodshed. It consists of a three-sided pavillion with a shed on either end. One shed is for storage, the other for the naturalist's quarters, and the pavillion is for "indoor" programs. It's well-suited for slide programs except for one thing . . . it has no electricity. The nearest power is over 200 feet away as the mouse runs. Consequently, for my first slide show, the rest of the staff scraped together umpteen of their personal extension cords, which they ran over the road and through the woods. The show was such a success that we are now the proud owners of 2 100-foot extension cords. It makes life a little easier.

Things have been going well at Savoy. But, recently I heard some disturbing news about budget cutbacks in the state. When questioning Savoy's Park Supervisor about the future of interpretation in the parks, he commented that he feels interpreters are too valuable, too indispensable, to be without. It reminded me of when I used to ask him for materials, he'd sadly shake his head and say, "The only thing we're allowed to buy as much of as we need is toilet paper. It's indispensable." I've never been ranked on par with toilet paper, but it occurred to me that interpretive naturalists are one step ahead. In the crisis of a toilet paper shortage, we could always show people what leaves to use!

Su Jewell

Here's to Our Interpreters

(to the tune of The Wabash Cannonball)

From the wide Atlantic Ocean, to the
high Berkshire hills
I've seen programs, posters, flyers and
interpreter's strong wills.
There's movies, knots and nature, something
for young and old
Our interpreters are planning great surprises
so I'm told

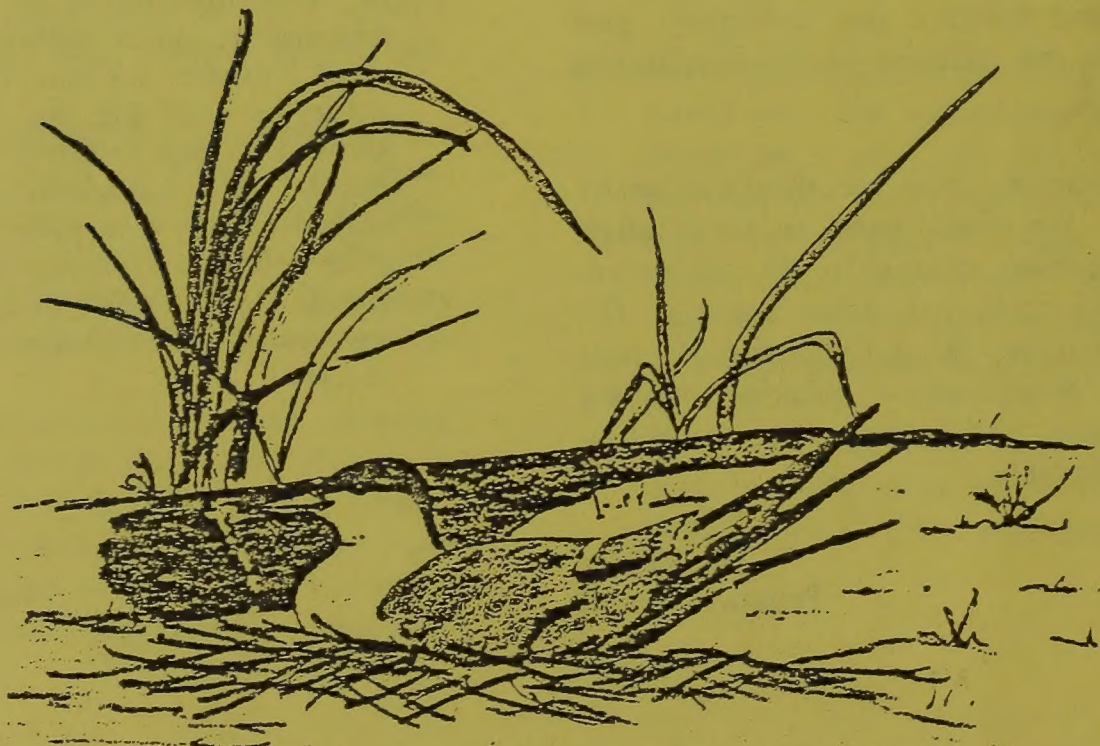


Chorus:
Listen to the singing, the excitement and
the roar
Tromping through the woodlands, the fields and
by the shore
See the view from mighty Greylock, hear the
falls down in Savoy
Our interpretive programs are always
such a joy.

Some other states are dandy, so people often say
But Massachusetts parks have a very special way
of pleasing groups of people who come to visit here
by giving them a special place to visit every year.

Here's to our interpreters, may their fame spread throughout the land
They've put on special programs and lent a helping hand
The season's almost over, the crowds are thinning out
The summer's been successful though, of this there is no doubt.

Heidi Krantz-Jones



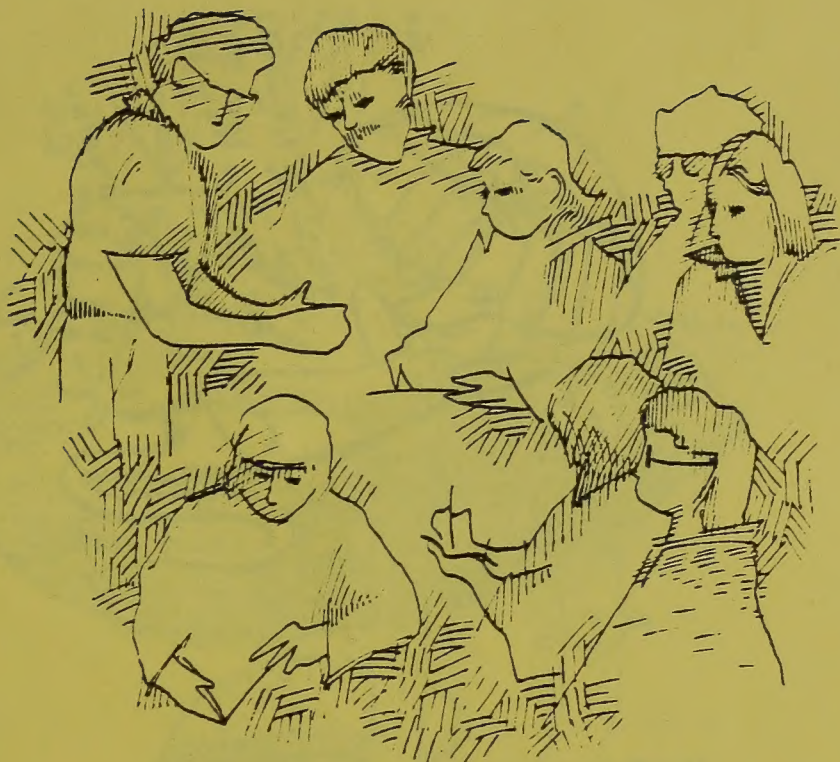
PARK VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers continue to provide valuable assistance and support for interpretive services in parks across the state. In Advisory Councils, "Friends" groups, or as individuals, they are providing a wide range of programming.

At Borderland, a very active volunteer group, known as Friends of Borderland, presents a popular year round series of programs, including tours of the Ames mansion and natural history, recreational and cultural programs. They have also written and distributed a pamphlet on the mansion's history. Largely through the efforts of the Coalition for the Preservation of the Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsboro State Forest, a self-guided trail and brochure are nearly complete for that area in Northeastern Mass. The Friends of Dighton Rock Museum have fabricated and installed a new exhibit for the museum, which outlines the four popular theories of the rock's mysterious inscriptions.

At seasonal interpretive programs, volunteers are involved in a variety of ways. Volunteers have led campfire sing-a-longs, presented slide-shows, and helped lead guided tours, all for only a small travel stipend as reimbursement.

The largest group of volunteers was recruited for the Boston Harbor Islands State Park. Over thirty people are contributing several weekends each during the summer to assist in the management of this unique park. The result, according to the island managers, is an increased schedule of interpretive programs on the islands. Eileen Granahan, the Information Specialist on Georges, has been able, for the first time, to give guided tours of Fort Warren, which have quickly become popular. At Gallops Island, a living history tour is possible because volunteers are providing visitor information on the dock.



The volunteer program at Walden has also been invaluable this summer, as related below by Debbie Lee:

Volunteer guides carried the interpretive program at Walden Pond this summer offering interpretive walks to Thoreau's house-site daily at 10:30 and 3:00. The guides came from all walks of life, with ages ranging from 17 to 40. One thing they had in common was a strong desire to help others appreciate Thoreau and Walden Pond. Six guides led more than 500 people on interpretive walks and provided information to at least another 500 visitors by offering them pamphlets and answering their questions.

I am sincerely grateful to the following volunteer guides for sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm with the many visitors to Walden Pond.

Gloria Curran
Ronald Dural
Sharon Lawrence
Christopher Lenney
Janice MacMillan Richter
Tom Wickham

Deborah Lee
Naturalist
Walden Pond State Reservation

events



Heidi Krantz-Jones reporting. . .

It amazes me how quickly the summer goes — you know how time flies! It has been fun visiting the parks and playing tourist. As a matter of fact, I recently purchased some baggy shorts, a flowered shirt and a big floppy hat to complete my official tourist outfit. Seriously, this summer has been great for me, and for all of you too, I hope. It has been challenging working behind the scenes, providing supplies and support for the interpreters in Regions 3, 4 and 5.

My travels have taken me from viewing Terri Talas's artful exhibits on Mt. Wachusett, to throwing Ann Marie Hine's boomerang. The programs I visited have all been tremendous. Attendance and interest in the programs are obviously high, a real credit to the efforts you've all put out.

All of my travelling, however, has not kept me away from the 'real thing'. On Sundays, I work up at Skinner State Park in Hadley, helping Dawn Marvin tell the story of the Prospect House. I'm hoping to put together some special programs for September and October. The program theme will be "September's Spacious Skies" which will be highlighted by sky observations, a program by Northeast Utilities on air pollution monitoring, and a week long art exhibit. The summer has been jam-packed with exciting new experiences, but I'm looking forward to the crystalline views from Mt. Holyoke. Stop by and visit some crisp fall day.

— New England Environmental Education Alliance Conference

Environmental Educators throughout New England will gather at the Mount Marie Conference Center in Holyoke, MA on October 30 — November 1, 1981 to explore the theme of "Urbanization — the Road We Have Taken?" Workshops will address four major areas, including: Formalized Urban Environmental Education Programs, Urban Ecosystems, Interdependence of Rural and Urban Environments, Environmental Impacts of the 'Urbanized Road'. For more details contact:

NEEEA Conference

MEES

15 State St.

Boston, MA 02109

— Photographer's Day on Peddocks Island

A special tour of Peddocks Island for you and your camera will happen on Saturday, Aug 29. An opportunity to walk through Fort Andrews, along paths of wildflowers, through forests, and by a vista of the other islands in the harbor. Catch the boat for Georges Island, 10 AM at Long or Rowes Wharf. Take the 11 AM water-taxi to Peddocks. You will be back on Georges by 1 PM.

— To all who have taken photos or done art work in the Boston Harbor Islands: One evening this fall, we will get together to share refreshments, photos (slides and prints), and art work. If you wish to come, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to J. Merzer, P.O. Box 975, Astor Station, Boston, MA 02123 and we will mail you all the details.

MT GREYLOCK

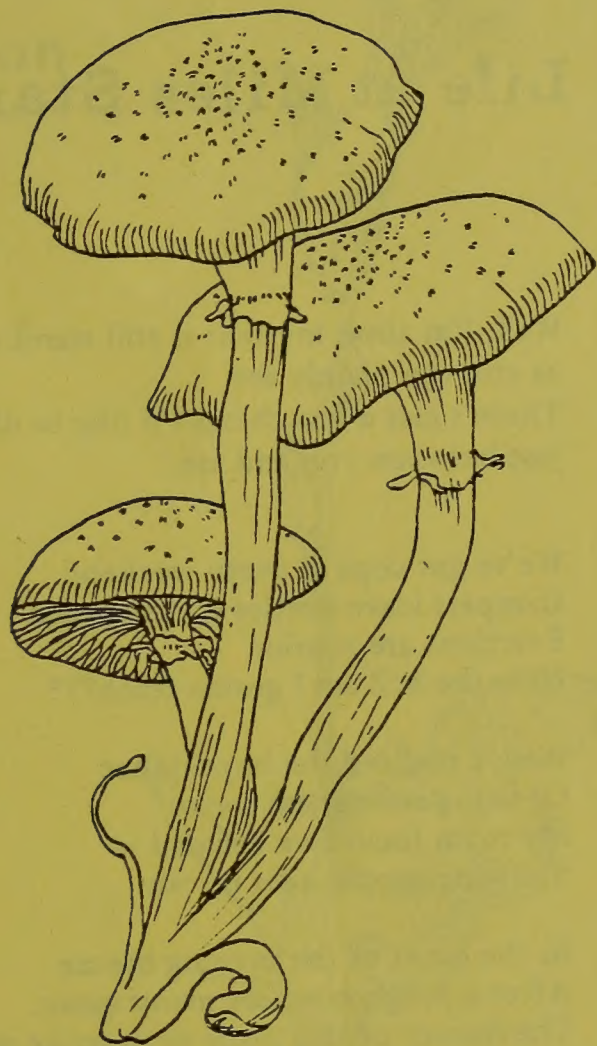
August has gotten off to a fine start here at Mt. Greylock. Despite one thunderstorm which almost blew us off the mountain, the weather has been pretty cooperative (which means that the summit hasn't been fogged in too much) and the number of visitors has been steady.

The day in Lowell was very helpful and enjoyable to me. Congratulations are in order for Nelson and Andrea for putting together a fine day of activities, especially lunch! I'm hoping that the skies continue to be cooperative and bring many cumulous clouds to interpret for people. They're much more fun than fog!

We've gotten some good press coverage up here which has helped the program. For weekday hikes, I've tried a system where people call in advance to arrange a hike or walk. Thanks to the press coverage the idea seems to be catching on. This allows me to plan things in advance and meet specific needs, as opposed to just scheduling a walk for a certain time and hoping that people show up. If I have no response for a certain day — it allows me to work on displays or do some trail maintenance. So far I've ranged from short hour walks to a ten mile hike scheduled for the near future.

I'm looking forward to working with the Youth Conservation Corps in Adams during the next few weeks. I'm helping them to organize an orienteering program as part of their environmental/outdoor education requirement. The major emphasis will be on compass reading and direction finding as well as the reading of topographic maps. The final step will be setting up a course and sending the corps members out. Hopefully, they will all come back!

Mike Van Dyke



How long does it take for discarded litter to decompose outdoors? Next time you're leading a group, see how many people know.

Orange peel: 2 weeks to 5 months
Plastic bags: 10 to 20 years
Plastic film: 20 to 30 years
Nylon fabrics: 30 to 40 years
Hiking boot soles: 50 to 80 years
Aluminum cans, tabs: 80 to 100 years



In order to make a tablespoonful of honey, a bee must visit about 2,000 flowers.



Life at Miles Standish

Well, I'm alive, my tent is still standing
as you can plainly see
There's just a few things I'd like to discuss —
just between you and me.

We've got cops in every weekend
Campers leave bottles on the beach
Evictions are routine
How the hell am I gonna teach???

Well, I realized the importance
Of being strong and aware
My main focus I've decided —
Showing people how to care.

In the quiet of the evening breeze
After a program where many came,
The beauty of this place doth strike me
Standish needn't have a bad name.

The whippoorwills sing you to sleep
Herons help you greet the day
A fox runs swiftly on a chilly night
And usually you get your pay.

The staff is fun and friendly
A few as supportive as can be
Smiles, laughs, and practical jokes
Some holler, "Get out of the rain! "
"Come have some tea!"

White pine plantations everywhere
Most 50 years of age,
They give the place a majestic space —
Freedom from the city's cage.

So don't believe the tales you hear
There are two sides to every story
Come on out to Miles Standish
Meet nature in all her glory!

Eve Berman



A BEACH WALK

Shirley Seavey reporting from Scusset beach. . .

The first interpretive effort at Scusset beach was a scheduled beach walk — for 32 cub scouts — at 6 AM. Scusset beach is a very clean stretch of sand; in spite of heavy traffic, the bathing area always looks neat and free of litter. Unfortunately shells are as scarce as bottle caps. The 6 AM walk was selected by joint deliberation because it was close to low tide. Interpretive Services arrived a generous interval before 6 AM, bearing a large box of labelled shells. I figured these were about the only shells we were likely to see all morning.

As it turned out, the participants were 32 boy scouts — quite a different proposition from cub scouts. You ask, "Boy scouts from Arkansas maybe?" Wrong, boy scouts from Plymouth. There is no kid from Plymouth who has not seen barnacles and soggy lumps of seaweed clinging to a breakwater. In a ¼ mile walk ankle deep in the tide, followed by a return trip along the high tide spindrift, we found one small dead skate, 13 kinds of seaweed culled from the breakwater, and 1 starfish, the size of a nickel. All of this on an empty stomach. Happily, the geology of the area is quite interesting, and that, plus the labelled shell specimens, added up to a very pleasant interpretive walk.

Racism and Cultural Interpretation

When interpreting a foreign culture, one must take care to avoid common, frequently racist assumptions which give way to false interpretation. These assumptions are rooted in false information — by basing our teaching on this, we continue to misrepresent different people's history and cultural identity, and thus perpetuate racism.

Not long ago, I was giving a talk on Native American Philosophy. I mysteriously appeared from the forest in 'traditional' garb — headband, buckskin jacket, and moccasins. I realized that, by doing this, I was misrepresenting and misinterpreting the American Indian.

It is possible to disseminate clear, accurate information about other cultures. A few helpful hints:

1. Obtain clear, accurate information
 - A. If possible, question someone from the culture you are interpreting.
 - B. Have at least two people as resources.
2. Never assume the information you obtain from books and other media is accurate or correct.
3. Search inside yourself for any stereotyping that may filter into your program. (A way to do this is to repeat the word i.e. Indian, Jew, Black, etc, and look at what thoughts and feelings surface.)

Eve Berman
Miles Standish



ELEGANCE

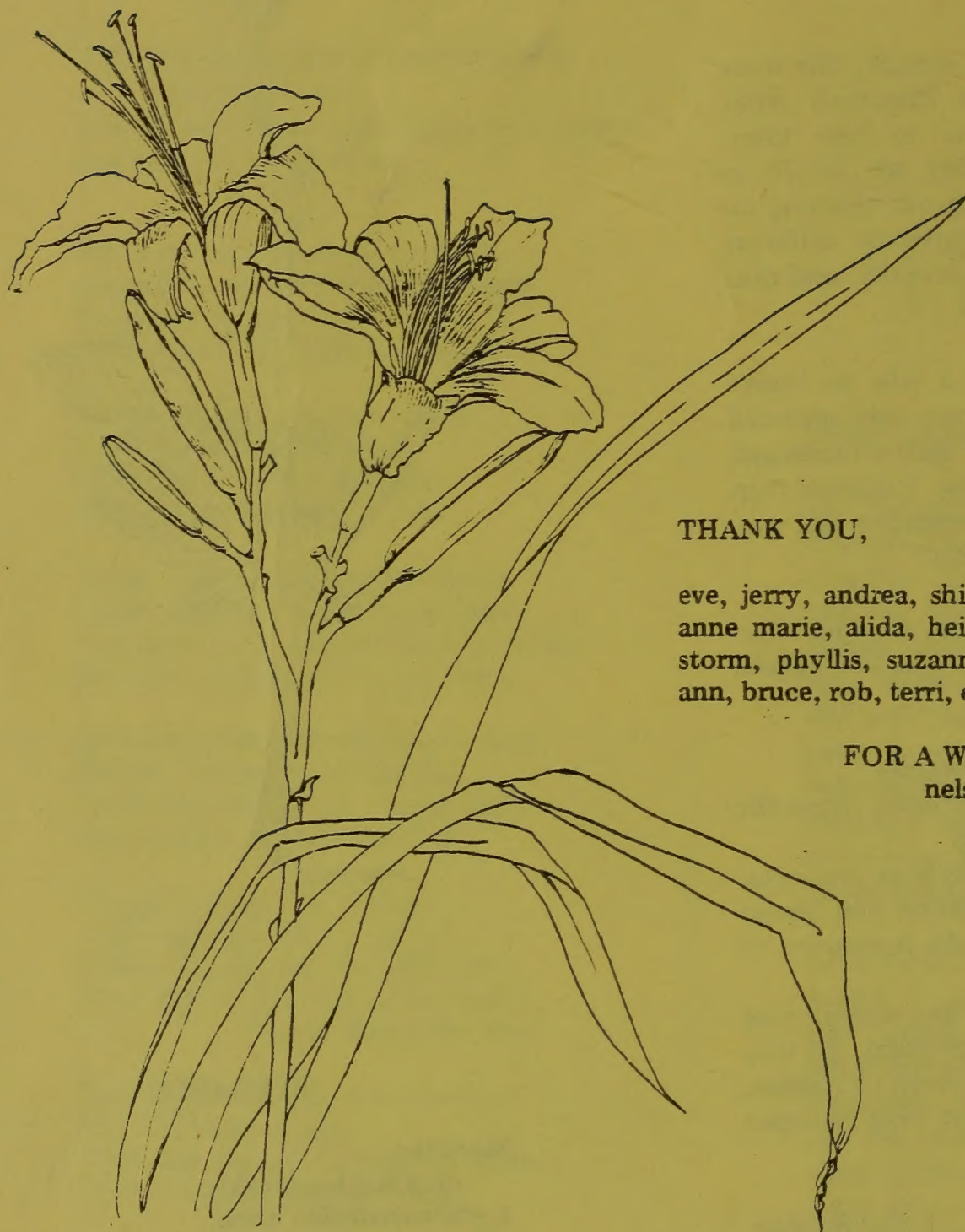
Stenciled

on a black satin sky,
a white enameled birch,
with a mantilla of lacy leaves
around her slender shoulders
holds
in her tapering fingers
the oval moon:
a teapot of polished pewter.

Edna Margaret Long

The whole secret of the study of nature lies
in learning how to use ones eyes

George Sand



THANK YOU,

eve, jerry, andrea, shirley, wendell, rona, dorothy, jeff, john
anne marie, alida, heidi, dawn, su, mike, carol, robin, diane
storm, phyllis, suzanne, karl, paul, brooke, brad, joy, kim
ann, bruce, rob, terri, eileen, deborah and kathy

FOR A WONDERFUL SUMMER!
nelson, andrea, alice

